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To: SimsburyCT_ParkRecMin
Cc:

Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission

Special Meeting: Thursday, July 28, 2011 at 7 p.m.

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman David Bush. Present commission members included Kelly Kearney, Harry Ryan, and Barbara Koff.

Others present included Gerry Toner, C., P. & R. Director; Robert Carter, Eagle Scout candidate from Simsbury Boy Scout Troop 175; and Evelyn Holland, chairwoman of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee.

II. Minutes

Since the number of commission members present did not represent a quorum, the June 23 minutes were not approved.

III. Eagle Scout Project Presentation

Robert Carter from Simsbury Boy Scout Troop 175 gave a presentation about his idea for an Eagle Scout project. He proposed building a 15 to 20 foot long crescent-shaped sitting wall along the Drake Hill Place side of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge. The wall will be built from brownstone and will measure about 16 to 20 inches high and 18 to 20 inches wide. It will start at the end of an existing mulched flowerbed and arch toward an existing bench, where it will stop. After a 3 foot opening/gap between the bench and the first picnic table, the wall will continue. It will be set back from the parking area so that the snow plow will not damage it in the winter. It is hoped that the brownstone for the wall will be donated by Ensign-Bickford from one of their recently demolished buildings. If this does not happen, Robert has a contact person for other sources of local brownstone. Robert provided the commission with a written proposal, a sketch, and a panoramic photograph of the proposed site for the wall. The sketch illustrated that the wall will be built on top of a 9-inch-deep

gravel filled trench.

The wall will be dry stacked, but cemented on the top for durability.

Evelyn Holland, chairwoman of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee, has helped Robert decide where to locate the wall. After this meeting, she will run Robert's proposal by the executive committee of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge for final approval. Both Mr. Toner and Ms. Holland were comfortable with the proposed clearance for snow removal since that would be a maintenance concern. Mr. Toner will set up a meeting with Park Superintendent Orlando Casiano to review the project.

The commission was curious about how Robert came up with the idea, what the timeline would be, how much the project would cost and how he would finance it, who would do the work, and what he thought might be a major stumbling block. Robert noted that Peter Adamowicz, assistant scout master, and VP of a construction company, came up with the idea. Robert turns 18 years old on November 23, 2011, so he hopes to complete this project before then. His tentative timeline includes beginning to raise funds in August and having the project fully completed by the end of September. Currently, he has no cost estimates for the project. He expects the materials to be donated by local businesses and the labor to be donated by Troop 175 scouts, scout leaders and friends and family members. He will rely on Mr. Adamowicz and Mr. Benjamin, scout fathers, for their expertise in construction. Mr. Benjamin's son built the rock wall that now stands at Henry James Middle School. Robert also plans to hold fund raisers, most likely a car wash, as the one held last weekend earned about \$1,000.00 for the troop. Robert felt that the major stumbling block in the project would probably be transporting the rocks. He mentioned that Mr. Gus Jasminski would help with that.

On behalf of the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission, Mr. Bush gave his full support to Robert's project, as long as it will be built to last and subject to any alterations suggested by the executive committee of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge, by Mr. Toner, or by the C., P. & R. Commission. The commission wished Robert much luck. They requested that he provide them with a formal document or workbook, preferably in digital form, that would categorize the project and the process.

VI. Program/Facility Report

Mr. Toner reported that he recently filled the opening for the Recreation Supervisor position. Taryn Rea was hired and will bring good insight and skills to the position.

Mr. Toner praised John Thibeault, current Recreation Supervisor, for doing an excellent job this summer in a challenging situation. Because schools

got out early this year, an extra week of camp was added to the C. P. & R. schedule, and the town pools were opened earlier. Also, major renovations at Central School were being done while summer camps were being held.

Mr. Toner also recognized the fabulous job that the seasonal and part-time Parks and Recreation staff did this summer.

VII. Special Revenue Fund Report

Mr. Toner presented a Special Revenue Fund Fiscal Year Comparison sheet that charted expenses and revenues from FY 2007/8 to FY 2010/11 (July 1 to June 30). To better illustrate the income made from the golf course, he also presented a document that listed the annual income from the Simsbury Farms Golf Course from the years 2000 to 2011. It was noted that the Special Revenue Fund has been in operation for about 14 years, and has helped C. P. & R. run more efficiently. The addition of increased overhead expenses has made it more difficult to be self sustaining. The Commission discussed whether they should eliminate the Special Revenue Fund or use it for one more year. When the fund was first set up, golf was more popular and Simsbury Farms Golf Course revenues were higher. In FY 2010/11, golf course expenses have increased and revenues are the lowest they've been in 4 years. If the tough economy continues to affect the golf industry, Mr. Toner admitted that it might be difficult for the Simsbury Farms Golf Course to generate sufficient revenues to keep the fund self-sustaining. He mentioned that expenses such as fuel and labor costs will continue to increase at a higher rate from year to year and that golf revenues will always be weather dependent. Audience member Gerry Wetjen added that 30% of the administrative budget used to be charged to the Revenue Fund, but now 70% of its budget goes against the fund.

Besides the golf course, discussion centered on the following budget points in the Special Revenue Fund: 1. Administrative, 2. Simsbury Farms Facility and 3. Vending. Administrative expenses for C., P. & R., which include salaries and benefits, were significantly increased from FY09/10 to FY10/11 because funding from the General Fund portion of the Department budget was added to this account. Simsbury Farms facility expenses were up while the revenues generated from the pools and the rink were down from FY09/10 to FY10/11.

He also noted that for the next C. P. & R. commission meeting, he would create a summary of expenses by account. When Commission chairman David Bush asked Mr. Toner what the C. P. & R Commission could do to support him, he suggested that the Commission could be included in the decision-making process when the Board of Selectman reviews the budget in December.

VIII. New Business. None.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott
Commission Clerk